accepted on condition that Emma could go with me if she wanted to. There was a rule forbidding the wives of military personnel to follow their husbands to the front, but a few exceptions had been made for the members of the High Command. Stankevich persuaded the War Ministry to make a similar exception for us, appointing Emma as my personal secretary. The Ministry did not expect her to perform any definite service, but Emma actually shared my work at the front and remained at the post under most taxing conditions, after all the male members of my staff had left. That story, however, comes later.

When I told Chkheidze I was leaving the Tauride Palace and asked him to sign my credentials for the front, he said gloomily, "I do not blame you. I wish I could leave too!" Stankevich and I left Petrograd on July 28. Emma joined me in Riga a week later.

ON THE NORTHERN FRONT

The army and front commissars were direct representatives of the government (actually the War Ministry) and the Executive Committee. As such, they acted as a link between the High Command of the army and the soldiers' organization. Their main task was to strengthen the morale of the troops. Each commissar had his own program of action. Stankevich's pet idea was to improve the morale of the soldiers by better technical training, substituting sports for the traditional drill. Army committees were not enthusiastic about this idea, and he had difficulty in finding a language in common with them. Generally, he was more successful in dealing with officers than in contacts with enlisted men. I think the main reason he was so eager to have me with him was that I could talk with the soldiers.

The Northern Front had headquarters in Pskov and originally consisted of two armies, the Twelfth on the right, with headquarters in Riga, and the Fifth on the left, with headquarters in Dvinsk. Later the First Army also became part of it.

My first conference with the front commander, General Klembovsky, and his staff was disappointing. The generals looked bored when Stankevich outlined his program and merely waited for him to stop so they could unload their grievances. I felt that their trivial frictions with the army committees interested them more than the war with Germany. The front commander was a man with obvious symptoms of advanced senility. In his youth he probably had measured some six-feet-six, but his frame was bent by arthritis. He had a huge purple nose, a trembling head, shaking hands, and bloodshot eyes that could not focus on a point for more than a couple of seconds. His speech was incoherent, as if he were drunk. When Stankevich asked him to